Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2013

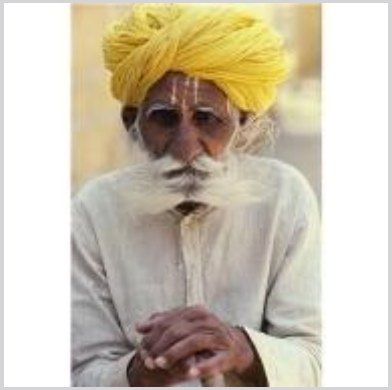
Building Leadership: Embracing Cultural Values and Inclusion

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

National Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month is a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders living in the U.S.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

AAPIs represent over 30 countries and ethnic groups that speak more than 100 different languages.



Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese people to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinenta May 10, 1869.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

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The majority of the workers who laid the tracks of the transcontinental railroad were Chinese immigrants.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

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On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution designating the annual celebration of AAPI Heritage

Photo courtesy of the White House

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Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed an extension, making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration.

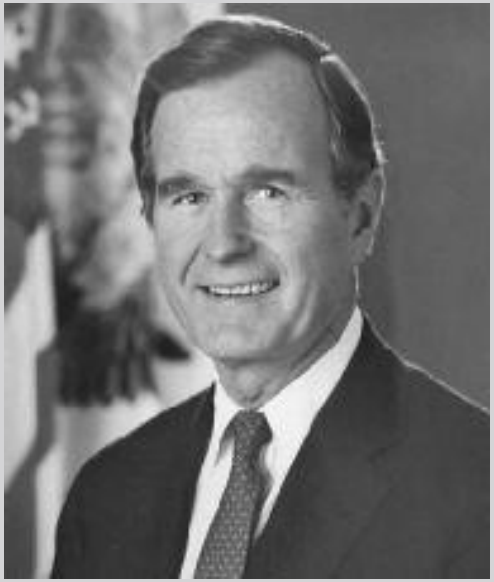

Photo courtesy of the White House

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In 2012, the White House commemorated the 100th anniversary of the first Japanese cherry blossom trees planted in Washington, D.C. They represent an enduring symbol of the friendship between the U.S. States and Japan.

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In 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the number of U.S. residents who were Asian (alone or in combination with one or more additional race 2 million.

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The Asian population grew 46 percent between 2000 and 2010, more than any other major race group.

Census projections expect the number to increase to more than 40.6 million by 2050.

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The Census Bureau also indicated that there are more than 1.4 million residents who said they were of Nativ
Pacific Islander origin,
comprising about 0.4 percen
of the total population.

Census projections expect the number to increase to more than 2.6 million by 2050.

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Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Shinseki was born in Lihue, Kauai, in the then Territory of Hawaii. His grandparents emigrated
from Hiroshima to Hawaii. He grew up in a sugar plantation community o

After high school, he attended th United States Military Academy, graduating in 1965.

Shinseki at West Point

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Shinseki served in a variety of command and staff assignments, including two combat tours in the Republic of Vietnam as an artillery forward observer and as commander of Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry Regiment.

During one of those tours, he stepped on a land mine, which caused extensive damage to a portion of one of his feet.

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During his tenure, Shinseki initiated the Army Transformation Campaign to address both the emerging strategic challenges of the early 21st century, and the need for cultural and technological change in the United States Army.

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Shinseki served as Chief of Staff, United States Army from 1999 to 2003, and retired in 2003.

He was sworn in as the seventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs on January 21, 2009.

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“As we look to the future, our mission is clear, our values define who we are, and our priorities—expand access for Veterans, eliminate the claims backlog, and end Veterans' homelessness—will be our guideposts through this difficult time for the Nation. Serving Veterans is a privilege and an honor.”

—Eric K. Shinseki Secretary of Veterans Affairs

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Anatolio B. Cruz III Navy Rear Admiral

Raquel C. Bono Navy Rear Admiral

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Cruz and Bono are the only siblings of Filipino descent to simultaneously hold flag-officer rank.

Bono said, *“Service to others; service to country. It was ingrained in us by our father and mother in gratitude to their adopted country, the United States.”*

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Their grandfather, an obstetrician in the Philippines, was commissioned as a U.S. Army colonel and supported his countrymen in their fight against the Japanese during World War II.

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Twenty years later, their parents left Manila for Minnesota, where their father completed his surgical residency.

Their father went on to serve in the Navy Reserve, eventually retiring as a captain.

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Bono enrolled at the University of Texas. She earned her medical degree at Texas Tech through the Navy's Health Professions Scholarship Program. She was the first woman to graduate from the program.

She began her military career with a general surgery residency at Naval Hospital Portsmouth, Virginia.

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“What I enjoyed about being in the Navy was that I always felt confident that my ability to be advanced was going to be based on my capabilities and my performance. I felt that I had an equitable opportunity to succeed.”

—Rear Admiral Raquel C. Bono

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Cruz graduated from the Naval Academy in 1980, and in the following year reported to USS Gray, where he was the only minority officer.

In 1982, he earned the Pacific Fleet Shiphandler of the Year Award.

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Cruz spent most of his career in special operations assignments and completed six command tours. Units he commanded earned the Leo Bilger Award for mission effectiveness and the Meritorious Unit Commendation for exceptional performance.

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Regardless of those accomplishments, he said he has always been in awe of his sister.

“She was the smart one and very disciplined at everything she did,” Cruz said. *“Dad set the bar and she raised that bar. Quite frankly, she deserved to make flag before I did.”*

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Representative Tulsi Gabbard

D-Hawaii

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She was raised by a Hindu mother and a Catholic father in “a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-faith family.”

“My parents…there were five kids in the family and they taught us from a very young age that…the only place happiness can be found is in the service of others.”

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An advocate for environmental policy, Gabbard successfully ran for the Hawaii State Legislature in 2002, becoming the youngest person ever elected to that body.

A year later, Gabbard joined the Hawaii National Guard to serve Hawaii's citizens and her country.

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In 2004, Gabbard voluntarily deployed to Iraq, serving two tours of combat duty in the Middle East.

She continues to serve as a captain in the Hawaii National Guard's 29th Brigade Combat Team.

Photo courtesy of Hawaii Army National Guard

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Swearing in ceremony
January 3, 2013

Gabbard, representing Hawaii's 2nd Congressional District, made history as the first female combat veteran, first Hindu, and first female of Samoan ancestry to become a member of Congress.

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“In the military, I learned that 'leadership' means raising your hand and volunteering for the tough, important assignments.”

—Tulsi Gabbard

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Generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have helped develop and defend the United States, often in the face of tremendous racial and cultural prejudice.

Despite these difficulties, these men and women struggled, sacrificed, and persevered to build a better life for their children and all Americans.

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Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have had a deep impact on our society as leaders in all facets of American life, thriving as athletes, public servants, scientists, and artists.

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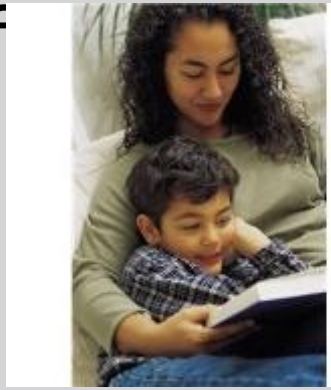
Whether as small business owners or as proud members of the United States armed forces, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders will prove instrumental in writing the next



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"Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders comprise many ethnicities and languages, and their myriad achievements embody the American experience."

—President Barack Obama

Photo courtesy of the White House

Sources

www.whitehouse.gov
www.va.gov
www.house.gov
www.navy.mil
www.army.mil

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